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RHMFSS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 000979

NOFORN
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DEPARTMENT FOR SRAP, SCA/A, NEA/FO, NEA/ARP (MCGOVERN), S/CT AND INR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/14/2019

TAGS: EFIN PTER PGOV PINR PK AF AE

SUBJECT: UAE CHARGES 3 WITH TALIBAN FINANCING

REFS: A) ABU DHABI 890
B) ABU DHABI 877
C) ABU DHABI 845
D) TD 314-005442-09 (01/26/09)

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR RICHARD OLSON FOR REASONS 1.4 (B AND D).

¶1. (C/NF) Summary: On September 28, Abu Dhabi based English language daily The National reported that seven Emiratis and one Afghan national had been charged with funneling money to the Taliban and supporting terrorist activity. The defendants reportedly denied the charges and said confessions were coerced. The case was first reported by Arabic and English language media on September 8, although initially without reference to Taliban financing. The next court appearance is scheduled for October 19, with arguments likely to continue for several weeks. The decision to publicize the case indicates UAE officials' commitment to combating terrorism - and domestic support for foreign terrorist organizations (Refs A-C). End summary.

¶2. (C/NF) A journalist covering the story told EconOff on October 15 that, according to court, legal and family sources, the eight individuals were part of a group of 21 arrested in Khor Fakkan (an exclave of the Emirate of Sharjah located on the East Coast of the UAE) in October 2008. The 21 included 19 Emiratis, one Egyptian and one Afghani who all worshipped at the Abdulrahman Al Dekal mosque, where the Afghani was the imam. (Note: The reporter did not know if the mosque was government operated or illegal. End Note.) At the time, the reporter said government sources reported the arrests were related to charges of alcohol and immigration violations, not terrorism. (Note: The circumstances of this case are similar to one reported in Ref D. However, that information did not include accusations of Taliban financing. End Note.)

¶3. (C/NF) At their first appearance at the Federal Supreme Court on September 7, the eiH\$y>Q}1QLARthe financing had been presented. One Emirati told the judge he was too indebted to give money to the Afghan, while another reported he gave the imam money for a car. On October 11, a government security official testified for the prosecution, but the hearing was closed to the public. Additional witnesses are expected to be heard on October 19. The reporter said the trial is likely to continue for a number of weeks before a judgment is issued.

¶4. (C/NF) It is particularly noteworthy that the UAE press -- including Arabic papers -- covered the story. The reporter told EconOff that government-inOh/=tuXS@y Al Amoudi commended the government's transparency as well as rule of law in the UAE. In the column titled "Brain Immunization," Al Amoudi wrote, "Our utmost priority is to prevent our youngsters' brains...and educate them about the pain caused by those who deform religion." The case was also discussed in online forums by Emiratis who commented that the coverage was unprecedented.

15. (C) Comment: Press coverage of the case is clearly intended to send a message to UAE nationals that the funding of domestic and foreign terrorism will not be tolerated, specifically including the Taliban. Post continues to press government sources for additional details. End Comment.

OLSON